

Inquiries of the Ministry

represented there by one of its members since we do not want to interfere with provincial matters. However, we shall be very happy—in fact we have already said so to Premier Robarts—to send senior officials as observers.

Mr. Maurice Allard (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Justice, in view of his interpretation of the recent statement made by Premier Johnson.

Is the Minister of Justice aware of the fact that the Quebec premier, contrary to every stand taken by the minister himself in this chamber and elsewhere, is in favour of a particular status for the province of Quebec?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Sherbrooke is asking the minister whether he is informed of a situation and, as phrased, I do not think that the question is in order.

Mr. Allard: The minister does not seem to be informed at all, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE**NATO—PROPOSED PLACING OF NUCLEAR MINES ON TURKISH BORDER**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Prime Minister is in a position to answer the question asked two days ago by my colleague the hon. member for York South. Perhaps I might be permitted to summarize the question. What attitude did the Minister of National Defence take toward the proposal made at the meeting of the nuclear planning group of NATO at Ankara? The proposal called for nuclear mines to be laid on the eastern border of Turkey which is also the border of the Soviet union. Can we be assured that Canada will oppose this proposal in view of our support of the principle of non-proliferation?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the nuclear planning group of NATO was established last year in order to permit the allies of the United States to participate in the formation of nuclear strategy. As my hon. friend knows, the ministers of defence of the member countries met at Ankara to consider the progress of a number of studies presently under way. One of those is on the question of atomic demolition mines. I might add, Mr. Speaker, that the nuclear planning group is not a decision making body but, rather, makes recommendations to the NATO council.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

The question of the use of atomic demolition mines as defensive weapons has been under consideration in NATO for some time. Because of the geographic situation of Turkey and the nature of the terrain of the Turko-Soviet border the Turkish government has been particularly interested in the possibility of using atomic demolition mines for the purpose of creating obstacles in the way of invading forces.

The nuclear planning group has accordingly been studying this question. Further study is being given to the matter, and the results are to be considered by the next ministerial meeting of the nuclear planning group in the spring of 1968. The Canadian position in connection with this proposal is primarily to assure ourselves that no arrangements would be recommended regarding these defensive weapons which could increase the danger of escalation or involve any form of nuclear proliferation.

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Why is it, then, that in 1965 the Canadian government denied any knowledge of this matter and later, when it was brought out, decided that it was classified information?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question is argumentative.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Then I will ask the Prime Minister a straightforward question. When did this information become unclassified?

[Translation]

WINTER WORKS**QUEBEC—REPORT FOR FLEXIBILITY IN STARTING DATES**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Charles-Eugène Dionne (Kamouraska): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

I should like to know the reply of the minister of manpower to the representations of the provinces, asking that the starting date for winter works be set by the municipalities rather than by the province.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I contacted Hon. Mr. Dozois who wrote to me on this matter, and I explained that we could not grant his request, because, from the administrative point of view, it would be absolutely impossible for us to control this program if each municipality were left free to choose a suitable date. That was my reply to Hon. Mr. Dozois.